

**Oklahoma Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board**  
313 N.E. 21<sup>st</sup> Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73005  
(405) 522-1984 | FAX (405) 557-1770

**MEETING MINUTES**

**November 20, 2024**

**Meeting Venue:** Office of the Oklahoma Attorney General  
313 NE 21<sup>st</sup> St, Oklahoma City, OK 73105

**MEMBERS**

Celia Cobb (OCME) [P]	Natascha Ferguson (OJA) [P]	Brandon Pasley (OCADVSA)
Melissa Van Duyne (OAG) [P]	Scott Hawkins (OSA) [A]	[A]
Brandi Combs (OSDH alt.) [A]	Don Sweger (OACP) [P]	Sheila Stinson (Supreme Court)
Emily Nicholls (OSDH IPS alt.) [P]	Laura Thomas (DAC) [P]	[A]
Marissa Belase (OKDHS alt.) [P]	Martina Jelley (OSMA) [P]	Shelly Harrison (NAAV) [A]
Lt. Jenny Virden (OSBI) [P]	Sara Coffey (OOA) [P]	Tania Bardin (NAAV) [A]
Melanie Ferguson (ODMHSAS) [P]	Janice Carr (ONA) [P]	
	Angela Beatty (OCADVSA alt.) [P]	

**I. Call to Order and Confirmation of Compliance with Open Meeting Act**

Vice Chair Marissa Belase presided over the regularly scheduled meeting of the Oklahoma Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board, which was held at the Office of the Oklahoma Attorney General, 313 NE 21<sup>st</sup> St, Oklahoma City, OK on November 20, 2024. Notice of the meeting was posted annually with the Secretary of State before the December 15, 2023, deadline and at the front door of the Office of the Attorney General more than 24 hours in advance. Vice Chair Marissa Belase (DHS) called the meeting to order at 9:24 am.

**II. Roll Call and Establishment of Quorum**

Roll call was conducted at 9:24 am. Quorum was achieved at roll call with 12 members present. An additional member arrived after roll call for a total of 13 members present during the meeting. One alternate designee was present but was not counted towards quorum at the time of roll call due to the primary designee being present. The alternate designee was Heather Cropper (OSBI). DVFRB staff present included Anthony Hernández Rivera, OAG DVFRB Program Manager (PM) and Nicholas Massey, OAG Research Analyst (RA).

Quorum was maintained throughout the meeting. It must be noted OAG Deputy Director of Government Affairs Macey Whitehouse was present during the open session of the meeting.

**III. Discussion and Possible Action on Approval of Minutes from the October 23, 2024, Regular Meeting\***

Angela Beatty (OCADVSA) moved to approve the October 23, 2024, regular meeting minutes at 9:26 am. Melanie Ferguson (ODMHSAS) seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes passed by roll call vote (10 Aye, 2 Abstain, 0 Nay).

**IV. Discussion and Possible Action on Proposed 2025 DVFRB Meeting Schedule\***

DVFRB PM Anthony Hernández reminded members the DVFRB is required to submit the 2025 meeting dates to the Oklahoma Secretary of State by December 15, 2024. He stated the DVFRB normally meets 11 times a year and two of those dates are joint meetings with the Child Death Review Board (CDRB). He added meetings are normally held the fourth Wednesday of every month except in July and November. The reason for the exception in July is because the DVFRB meets during the CDRB's meeting schedule and in November the regular DVFRB schedule tends to coincide with the Thanksgiving holiday. He also reminded members at least one meeting is dedicated towards reviewing a case in the community where it happened.

Mr. Hernández stated wanted to make sure members still preferred having the community review take place in June or if they rather move it to earlier or later in the year. He explained meeting quorum tends to be difficult due to summer commitments or time-off. Janice Carr (ONA) proposed changing the community review date to April. Members agreed with this proposal.

Mr. Hernández then mentioned he reviewed the dates presented in the previous meeting and developed a proposal whereby the November meeting date was pushed to the first or second week of December instead. He explained this would give staff more time to prepare a homicide case file to review while also drafting the annual report recommendations. Mr. Hernández stated an additional week or two between the October meeting and the last meeting of the year would give DVFRB staff additional time to present much more complete drafts of the recommendations that will ultimately be included in the annual report. Members agreed with this proposal.

Sara Coffey (OOA) made a motion to approve the 2025 DVFRB meeting dates. Janice Carr (ONA) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (13 Aye, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain) at 9:40 am.

**V. Continued Discussion and Possible Action on the 2024 Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board Annual Report, including Board Recommendations, Spotlight Candidates and Member Activities\***

DVFRB PM Anthony Hernández provided an overview of the first draft recommendation. He stated the recommendation entailed proposing the state to appropriate funds to set up a statewide program focused on providing wrap-around direct trauma-informed services to children, adolescents, and their caregivers. These services, which include specialized case management and therapy, would be provided to those directly impacted by family violence-related homicide. Members were given several minutes to review the draft and then provide feedback. Melanie Ferguson (ODMHSAS) stated the recommendation should emphasize the degree of specialization needed to treat this unique population. She added it was important to effectively communicate the degree of specialization needed so that critics do not brush aside the recommendation by pointing to existing mental health support resources. Angela Beatty (OCADVSA) stated it was important to add language about the lack of services to support those who are raising children of murdered parents. Ms. Beatty mentioned it was important to emphasize that there is no continuity, and that no existing services are comprehensive. Overall, members approved of the draft and agreed it merited being the first recommendation in the 2024 annual report.

Mr. Hernández proceeded to provide an overview of the second draft recommendation. He stated this recommendation would call for the creation of a domestic violence-specific hearsay exception under 12 O.S. §2803.3. The goal of this recommendation would be to provide prosecutors across

the state with more tools to hold abusers accountable by using evidence-based prosecution. This recommendation would align with recent Child Hearsay exceptions enacted by the legislature during recent legislative sessions. Members were given several minutes to review the draft and then provide feedback. Melanie Ferguson (ODMHSAS) suggested adjusting language in the second paragraph of the rationale section to emphasize that not all battered victims are females. Emily Nicholls (OSDH IPS) suggested adjusting language in a later section to avoid unintentionally communicating that domestic violence victims are not able to make decisions for themselves by equating them with children. Overall, members again approved of the draft and agreed it should be slated to be the second recommendation in the 2024 report.

DVFRB members proceeded to review the third draft. Mr. Hernández let members know this draft needed significant work, but he nevertheless outlined how he intended to structure the writing. He reminded members that the goal of this recommendation was to strengthen areas of the state's victim protective order (VPO) system. This included amending parts of 22 O.S. §60.6(A)(2) and (B)(2) so that prosecutors are allowed to file subsequent VPO violations as a felony if the accused had a prior deferred sentence or a low fine for the same crime. The second part of the recommendation entailed amending VPO-related statutes to increase clarity and uniform application by aligning them with broader changes enacted in 2019. Members were given several minutes to review the draft and then provide feedback. Emily Nicholls (OSDH IPS) suggested the first sentence in the introduction be modified to include other situations where individuals could seek out VPOs, like stalking, sex crimes, etc. Overall, members approved of the outline draft and agreed it should be slated as the third recommendation in the 2024 report.

DVFRB members proceeded to review the fourth draft. Mr. Hernández stated this recommendation would focus on encouraging legislators to revisit the recommendations in the 2023 annual report that were not enacted into law in the 2024 legislative session. He added the idea was to reuse the language of the second recommendation in the 2023 report. Members agreed with the idea of including the 2023 recommendations in the 2024 report to remind legislators there is still a need for those statutory changes to be implemented. They also agreed this draft should be slated as the fourth recommendation in the 2024 report.

DVFRB members proceeded to review the final draft. Mr. Hernández explained this recommendation would highlight issues surrounding the recently enacted 21 O.S. § 1173.1, otherwise known as the Stalking Warning Letter. Members were given several minutes to review the draft and then provide feedback. Angela Beatty (OCADVSA) suggested this draft should be included in another section of the report and not as a recommendation. She argued the DVFRB's role is to draw recommendations from case reviews and the DVFRB had yet to review a case where the stalking warning letter played a role in a homicide. Mr. Hernández agreed and suggested the draft could be included as a "spotlight" where the DVFRB elevates the Stalking Warning Letter issues. Members agreed with this approach and said it should be included as an "Issue Spotlight." They all agreed this was an important issue to elevate in the report and should be presented after the recommendations.

After discussing the drafts, Mr. Hernández reminded members the spotlight section in the report would include two articles. The first would highlight the historic state appropriations funding increase to Oklahoma Attorney General certified victim services program. The other would

highlight the federal grant funding secured by DVFRB staff to launch a statewide Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) implementation project. He then reminded members that the report includes a section highlighting member activities within their professional capacity aimed at improving our state's response to domestic violence. He added he would be contacting members via email requesting they make language submissions if they wish to be featured.

Angela Beatty (OCADVSA) then made a motion to accept the recommendations for the 2024 DVFRB Annual Report. Sara Coffey (OOA) seconded the motion. The motion passed by roll call vote (13 Aye, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain).

**VI. Discussion and Possible Action on Creating 2024 DVFRB Annual report Recommendation Final Draft Review Subcommittee\***

Mr. Hernández reminded members that in previous years the final drafts are reviewed and approved by the DVFRB Chair and Vice Chair closer to the publication date. He asked members whether they wished to continue doing that or if they would rather have a subcommittee dedicated to doing a final vetting of the recommendations. He added he wanted to bring this up since some of the drafts reviewed still needed to be worked on so the final product might be slightly different. Members appreciated the suggestion but thought it best to submit it to the DVFRB Chair and Vice Chair for final approval as it's been done in recent years.

No action was taken.

**VII. Consideration of Motion to Adjourn to Executive Session\***

*Pursuant to 25 O.S. § 307B for the purpose of case review*

- a. Adjourn to Executive Session\*
- b. Review and Discussion on whether a potential 2023 homicide fits into the DVFRB data collection criteria
- c. Continued Review and Discussion of case #210015
- d. Review and Discussion of Case #220006
- e. Consideration of return from executive session and return to regular meeting agenda.

Chief Don Sweger (OACP) made a motion to adjourn to executive session at 11:06 am. Emily Nicholls (OSDH IPS) seconded the motion. The motion passed by roll call vote (13 Aye, 0 Abstain, 0 Nay). Quorum was maintained throughout the executive session. The Board concluded and came out of executive session at 11:27 am.

**VIII. Announcement by Chair as to the necessity of any Board action as a result of Executive Session. Vote as a result of Executive Session\***

No action was taken as a result of executive session.

**IX. New Business Not Known or Which Could Not Have Been Reasonably Foreseen Before the Posting of the Agenda in Accordance with 25 O.S. § 311(9).**

No new business.

**X. Announcements**

No new announcements.

**XI. Adjournment\***

Sara Coffey (OOAG) made a motion to adjourn at 11:28 am. Melissa Van Duyne (OAG) seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 11:28 am.